

Message Text

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ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01 /108 W

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R 280450Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7865

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION GENEVA

CDR JCRC NKP

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1624

FOR U/PW SIEVERTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, LA

SUBJECT: VISIT OF ICRC/LAOS REPRESENTATIVE TO
SAM NEUA

1. ICRC/LAOS REPRESENTATIVE WERNER BLATTER SPENT
FEBRUARY 14-17 IN LPF HEADQUARTERS AT SAM NEUA WHERE
HE DISCUSSED POW/MIA MATTERS WITH LPF CHAIRMAN
SOUPHANOUVONG AND OTHER PATHET LAO LEADERS. HE BRIEFED
EMBOFF ON HIS TALKS FEBRUARY 26.

2. WERNER SAID HIS 90-MINUTE DISCUSSION OF MIA MATTERS
WITH SOUPHANOUVONG LEFT HIM NOT NEARLY AS PESSIMISTIC
AS HE HAD BEEN BEFORE. HE SAID SOUPHANOUVONG WAS
VISIBLY PLEASED WHEN BRIEFED ON POTENTIAL ICRC FACILI-
TIES, INCLUDING TRACING AGENCY, THAT COULD BE MADE
AVAILABLE TO ASSIST LAO PRATIES. SOUPHANOUVONG
TOLD HIM THAT PATHET LAO'S FIRST CONCERN WAS "THE
LIVING, I.E., THE LAO PEOPLE," BUT THAT ALL PROVISIONS
OF THE LAOS PROTOCOL WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED SCRUPULOUSLY,
INCLUDING THOSE CONCERNED WITH POW/MIA MATTERS. HE
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SPOKE OF LAO AS WELL AS THAI PRISONERS AND MIA.

3. SOUPHANOUVONG STRUCK BLATTER AS "STRONG AND BRIGHT, VERY MUCH IN COMMAND." SOUPHANOUVONG SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO RETURNING TO LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE, BUT EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER PROBLEMS OF SECURITY FOR PATHET LAO LEADERS IN THOSE CITIES.

4. SOUPHANOUVONG SUGGESTED THAT BLATTER INTRODUCE POW/MIA QUESTION INTO FORUM OF JOINT COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT AGREEMENT. BLATTER FEELS THAT HE CAN NOW GO TO PHOUN SIPRASEUTH AND SOTH PHETRASY AND SPEAK OF POSSIBLE ICRC ROLE IN THIS CONTEXT WITH AUTHORITY OF HAVING DISCUSSED IT WITH CHAIRMAN HIMSELF.

5. EMBOFF SUGGESTED TO BLATTER THAT HE CONSIDER REQUESTING JCCIA ACTION ON ARTICLE 18(C) OF LAOS PROTOCOL AS OPENING GAMBIT. THIS ITEM WAS INCLUDED ON LPF AGENDA OF JCCIA TOPICS NECESSARY TO SETTLE BEFORE FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SIDETRACKED. BLATTER HOPES HE CAN MAKE PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT TO FULL JCCIA SOON. HE WILL REQUEST THAT SUBCOMMITTEE BE FORMED TO DEAL WITH ARTICLE 18(C).

6. WE HAVE BEEN QUIETLY MAINTAINING PRESSURE ON LPF DELEGATION HERE TO TAKE UP QUESTION OF ARTICLE 18(C), WHICH SOTH PHETRASY AGREED LAST OCTOBER COULD BE ADDRESSED BEFORE FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT. WE VIEW OUTCOME OF BLATTER'S VISIT TO SAM NEUA AS ENCOURAGING SIGN, BUT SUSPECT THAT BOTH SIDES ARE NOW TOO ENMESHED IN PROCESS OF FORMING GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION DILIGENTLY. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, WE ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE ANY BACKUP INFORMATION BLATTER MAY DESIRE, IF HE CAN PUSH THROUGH HIS PROPOSAL WITH JCCIA.
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